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HOUSE RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, The members of the House of Representatives of the State of Illinois are pleased to recognize the 65th birthday and 40 years of service in the Civil Rights Movement of a human rights, religious, and political icon, the Reverend Jesse L. Jackson, Sr.; and

WHEREAS, He was born on October 8, 1941, in Greenville, South Carolina, and graduated from the public schools in Greenville; he then enrolled in the University of Illinois on a football scholarship; he later transferred to North Carolina A&T State University and graduated in 1964; he began his theological studies at the Chicago Theological Seminary, but deferred his studies when he began working full-time in the Civil Rights Movement; he received his earned Master of Divinity degree in 2000; and

WHEREAS, Reverend Jesse Jackson began his activism as a student in the summer of 1960, seeking to desegregate the local public library in Greenville, and then as a leader in the sit-in movement; in 1965, he became a full-time organizer for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC); he was soon appointed by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. to direct SCLC's Operation Breadbasket program; and

WHEREAS, In December of 1971, Reverend Jackson founded Operation PUSH (People United to Serve Humanity) in Chicago; the goals of Operation PUSH were economic empowerment and expanding educational, business, and employment opportunities for the disadvantaged and people of color; and

WHEREAS, In 1984, he founded the National Rainbow Coalition, a national social justice organization, based in Washington, D.C., devoted to political empowerment, education, and changing public policy; in September of 1996, the Rainbow

1 Coalition and Operation PUSH merged in the Rainbow/PUSH  
2 Coalition to continue the work of both approaches and to  
3 maximize resources; and

4 WHEREAS, Reverend Jackson's two presidential campaigns  
5 broke new ground in U.S. politics; his 1984 campaign registered  
6 over one million new voters, won 3.5 million votes, and helped  
7 the Democratic Party regain control of the Senate in 1986; his  
8 1988 campaign registered over two million new voters, won seven  
9 million votes, and helped boost hundreds of state and local  
10 elected officials into office; it was also an historic victory,  
11 because he came in first or second in 46 out of 54 primary  
12 contests; and

13 WHEREAS, He has continued to be a leading advocate for a  
14 variety of public policy issues, including universal health  
15 care, equal administration of justice in all communities,  
16 sufficient funding for enforcement of civil rights laws, and  
17 increased attention to business investment in under-served  
18 domestic communities; and

19 WHEREAS, As a highly respected and trusted world leader,  
20 Reverend Jackson has acted many times as an international  
21 diplomat in sensitive situations; in 1984, Reverend Jackson  
22 secured the release of captured U.S. Navy Lieutenant Robert  
23 Goodman from Syria and the release of 48 Cuban and  
24 Cuban-American prisoners in Cuba; he was the first American to  
25 bring hostages out of Kuwait and Iraq in 1990; in 1999, he  
26 negotiated the release of U.S. soldiers held hostage in Kosovo;  
27 he has traveled extensively in the Middle East and Asia and was  
28 a special guest of President Fernando Cardoso of Brazil in  
29 honoring Zumbi, the leader of slave revolts that led to the end  
30 of slavery in Brazil; and

31 WHEREAS, A hallmark of Reverend Jackson's work has been his  
32 commitment to youth; he has visited thousands of high schools,

1 colleges, universities, and correctional facilities  
2 encouraging excellence, inspiring hope, and challenging young  
3 people to study diligently and stay drug-free; and

4 WHEREAS, Reverend Jackson has also been a consistent and  
5 vigorous supporter of the labor movement in the U.S. and around  
6 the world; he is known as someone who has walked more picket  
7 lines and spoken at more labor rallies than any other national  
8 leader; and

9 WHEREAS, In October of 1997, Reverend Jackson was appointed  
10 by President Bill Clinton and Secretary of State Madeleine  
11 Albright as "Special Envoy of the President and Secretary of  
12 State for the Promotion of Democracy in Africa"; in this  
13 official position Reverend Jackson traveled to several  
14 countries on the African continent and met with national  
15 leaders; and

16 WHEREAS, Reverend Jackson married his college sweetheart  
17 Jacqueline Lavinia Brown in 1963; they have five children:  
18 Santita Jackson, Congressman Jesse L. Jackson, Jr., Jonathan  
19 Luther Jackson, Yusef DuBois Jackson, Esq., and Jacqueline  
20 Lavinia Jackson, Jr.; therefore, be it

21 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE  
22 NINETY-FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that  
23 we congratulate the Reverend Jesse L. Jackson Sr. on the  
24 occasion of his 65th birthday; and be it further

25 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be  
26 presented to Reverend Jackson as an expression of our profound  
27 respect and esteem and with best wishes for the future.